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ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
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SUBJECT: SLM/MM ATTACKS LIKELY PROVOKED GOS BOMBING IN SOUTH DARFUR

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On November 23-24, members of the Sudan Liberation Movement of Minni Minnawi (SLM/MM) ruefully acknowledged that their movement attacked a GoS force on November 19. These sources claimed that the GoS then bombed SLM/MM positions on November 22, destroying stolen SLM/MM assets. UNDSS contacts asserted a Russian MiG most likely did bomb positions in South Darfur this past week, though UNAMID has not been able to confirm the details of this attack. If true, these contacts stated that this is the first aerial bombardment in the state since July 2008 and the first confrontation between SLM/MM and the GoS since the September 19 El-Fasher agreement. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On November 23, SLM/MM South Darfur representative Mohaydin Younis told poloff that a joint SLM/MM-SLM/Unity force attacked a Central Reserve Police convoy north of Nyala between Thabit and Manawashi on November 19. According to Younis, the aggressive Ali Karbino led SLA/Unity's forces in the attack. Younis was reluctant to discuss SLM/MM involvement, but eventually acknowledged that SLM/MM also participated and stole two GoS gas trucks in the attack. Younis claimed that the Central Reserve Police have repeatedly targeted SLM/MM, and that "our problem is with the CRP," not with humanitarian organizations or the international community. Younis said that the janjaweed make up the largest percentage of the CRP and therefore deserve to be targeted by SLM/MM. Younis added that SLM/MM also considers the CRP to be a target of opportunity (as it is the best equipped group,) and that the GoS's neglect of the DPA leaves SLM/MM with no other choice but to engage in banditry and robbery. Younis reported that GoS air operations later in the week targeted SLM/MM positions, destroying the stolen gas tankers.

¶3. (SBU) Younis also briefly discussed GoS military operations in other parts of Darfur. According to Younis, SLA/Unity, URF, and SLA/AW were the primary rebel movements fighting the GoS near Helif the week of November 16. He also said that the GoS bombed a water well near Kurbia "intentionally targeting the people of the region." Younis said that the people of Kurbia now have to walk two days to retrieve water, and that "they are really suffering there."

¶4. (SBU) SLM/MM members based in Nyala also confirmed that SLM/MM attacked GoS positions the week of November 16. SLM/MM Secretary General of South Darfur, Muhammad Adam Salim told poloffs that SLM/MM fought with Central Reserve Police in Darfur, but claimed that SLM/MM acted solely in self-defense. Salim and his South Darfur SLM/MM colleagues added that the GoS conducted operations in four areas throughout Darfur within the last week: Abu Dungal, Meidob, Jebel Adoula, and North of Kutum. These SLM/MM representatives also claimed that the GoS has deployed troops South of Nyala to Gereida, and maintained that the GoS is conducting oil exploration in the area.

¶5. (SBU) Salim said that the security arrangement following the September 19 Minnawi-Taha agreement has failed. Contrary to the

latter agreement the GoS and SLM/MM have not informed each other of their military movements, the GoS has not paid compensation to SLM/MM for its attacks in September, and the GoS has certainly not restricted its flights over SLM/MM areas. These contacts stated that the situation in Darfur has grown worse since President Bashir's announcement of a unilateral ceasefire. "The NCP is playing for time right now - there is no change politically and the Minnawi-Taha El-Fasher agreement has failed just like the DPA," stated Salim.

¶6. (SBU) In developments along the strategic El Fasher-Malha road, Suleiman Marjan, a rebel commander recently aligned with SLA/AbdulWahid, and Abdalla Banda confirmed that although they have spotted SAF Antonov planes flying over the area in the last several days, there have been no attacks on villages or rebel encampments in the area. As part of a larger SAF push in the region northeast of El Fasher, Marjan said that the SAF have consolidated their control over Malha, using it as a base to supply troops and venturing further into rebel-held territory in North Darfur. This rebel-held strip in the particularly barren North serves as a strategic jumping off points for possible future rebel raids into the Nile Valley and Kordofan.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: Although many of the details remain unclear and the stories between SLM/MM's Younis and Salim do not exactly correspond, it is significant that SLM/MM contacts admitted to an SLM/MM attack on a GoS force. If true, this would be the most direct engagement between SLM/MM and the GoS since the September agreement between Minnawi and Vice President Taha. It also shows that SLM/MM continues to ally itself with non-signatory rebel groups making common cause against regime targets. These events, the

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competing versions of what actually happened, and UNAMID's inability to confirm their details, prove once more the need for an interim mechanism for monitoring and reporting violence in Darfur but also underscore the challenge such a mechanism will face: it could well uncover numerous instances of rebel instigated violence and outright banditry. END COMMENT.

FERNANDEZ